

Through 'Hillanthropy,' CU students help clean up Boulder's University Hill

By Sarah Kuta

Staff Writer
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Jamming out to Taylor Swift, University of Colorado freshmen Austin Klemm, Nick Luchetta and Phil Ripp stood on step stools scraping stickers off a parking sign at 13th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue on Monday morning.

The three students were helping to clean up University Hill as part of "Hillanthropy," a campaign launched last fall to revitalize the Boulder neighborhood west of campus.

The students said they hope the clean-up initiative helps the Hill's permanent residents see CU students as good neighbors and not just as young adults who like to party.

"That's not all kids," said Luchetta, who came to CU from Colorado Springs. "We're not all really huge partiers or trash throwers and stuff like that."

Several CU offices are partnering with the city on Hillanthropy, including Residence Life, which runs the annual Stampede Camp for incoming freshmen. The three-day camp, which started Saturday, includes service projects, leadership workshops and campus resource presentations.

Roughly 100 freshmen participated in the camp this year, which means they were able to move into their dorms early and will help other freshmen and their families when those students move in later this week.

On Monday, the freshmen split into teams and spread out on the Hill, scraping stickers from signs and posts, painting over graffiti and picking up trash.

Before heading out, the students heard from Sarah Wiebenson, Boulder's Hill community development coordinator, about the character of the neighborhood, which is home to students and permanent residents.

"Sometimes there are issues with town-gown relations, so it's really wonderful that you're all here today to try to show the residents of the Hill that you're here to help and you want to have a positive relationship with them," Wiebenson told the group of freshmen clad in matching black T-shirts.

Olivia Squalls, a sophomore who is serving as a mentor for this year's class of Stampede freshmen, helped clean up the Hill last August.

She said it was a good introduction to the popular off-campus neighborhood.

"It's just a great way to give back, and you get to see so many different sides of the Hill and not just the side of, like, 'Oh, well everyone just goes here to party,'" she said. "This is actually a community where people live. I have a professor who lives on the Hill and there's a lot of families here, so you want to keep it really nice.

"It teaches you that it's not just a place you go and trash, it's a place where people live."

Sarah Kuta: 303-473-1106, kutas@dailycamera.com or twitter.com/sarahkuta

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